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PAST PRESIDENT

June 24, 1998

Mr. Fred Hansen  
Deputy Administrator  
U.S.EPA  
401 M St. SW  
Washington D.C. 20460

RE: Extension of NEPPS FY 98 Core Performance Measures (CPMs)

Dear Fred:

On August 20, 1997 you and Harold Reheis, then President of ECOS, approved the Joint Statement for Measuring Progress Under NEPPS and established the first set of Core Performance Measures (CPMs) under the 1995 NEPPS Agreement between EPA and the states. The Joint Statement was designed to provide guidance to the implementation of the NEPPS CPMs and to support development of FY 98 Performance Partnership Agreements (PPAs). It was an important beginning to a longer-term effort to develop enhanced measures for gauging program performance.

In order to give us time to negotiate enhancements to the FY 98 CPMs and the Joint Statement a majority of ECOS members have recently authorized us to negotiate a one year extension to them, with two caveats. The first is that EPA reaffirm its support for and assure greater consistency of interpretation by EPA of the flexibility provisions in the original Joint Statement regarding applicability of the national CPMs. During the first year of implementation some EPA staff in regional offices tried to portray the CPMs as mandatory while others interpreted the Joint Statement as it was intended. The Joint Statement clearly indicates that the national CPMs are presumed to be included in PPAs but it offers several examples of when they may not be included. For instance, in a particular state selected national CPMs may not fit very well, there may not be adequate data, alternative measures may work better, or there may be higher priorities in that state. The key here is that common sense should be allowed to guide the choices that state environmental commissioners and EPA Regional Administrators jointly make in their PPAs.

The second concern expressed strongly by many states is that we have not yet made enough progress on reporting and burden reduction. We have therefore asked each of the ECOS Committees to make the identification of reporting and burden reduction opportunities a high priority for this summer/fall as they are working on CPM enhancements. We ask that you direct your National Program Managers (NPMs) to do likewise so that we can work together to achieve substantial progress in this endeavor for the coming year.

We propose that the extension of the CPMs and Joint Statement for FY 99 be effectuated by an exchange of letters between us. This letter will constitute our acceptance of a one year extension of the FY 98 CPMs and Joint Statement subject to your sending us a written response affirming your support for the extension and

describing how you are addressing the two items of concern described above.

The next phase of our efforts is to develop enhanced CPMs for FY 2000 and beyond and to update the Joint Statement. The CPMs effort is already underway and is being coordinated for us by the CPMs Work Group of the ECOS Strategic Planning Committee. We hope to make significant additional progress in shifting to outcome based measures from output based measures. The substantive work on program specific CPMs is being conducted jointly by the ECOS Committees and EPA NPMs. This effort is aimed at achieving much better alignment among environmental goals, objectives, indicators and measures and the information/reporting needs to support each measure. Information and reporting requirements that are not integral to supporting the enhanced CPMs should be prime candidates for reporting and burden reduction. The Information and Data Management Work Group of the Strategic Planning Committee is also working with their EPA colleagues to identify non-CPM related reporting and burden reduction opportunities.

As part of this process we are asking each ECOS Committee to do two additional things with their EPA counterparts. First, to identify resource needs associated with enhancing information necessary to support better outcome based measures. This should be done in early 1999 so that the recommendations can be proposed for consideration in the EPA FY 2001 budget request. Second, to flag any substantive environmental goals or objectives from the first EPA Strategic Plan for GPRA that we believe may need modification in Round #2 of your Strategic Plan development. We would like to establish an early informal dialogue with you on the key issues that are raised here about your goals and objectives.

Our plan is to prepare a draft package of proposed FY 2000 CPM enhancements and burden reduction candidates by the end of September, 1998 and to present them to the ECOS membership for consideration at our Annual Meeting in October. We hope that you can encourage your NPMs to work with us to formulate these proposals in this time frame. We look forward to a response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Robert C. Shinn, Jr.  
Commissioner, New Jersey Department of  
Environmental Protection  
President, Environmental Council of the States

cc: ECOS Members